

September 8, 2005

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE TORRANCE AIRPORT COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Airport Commission convened in a regular session on Thursday, September 8, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Dingman, Gates and
Ouwerkerk.

Absent: Commissioners Donnellan, Tymczyszyn and
Chairperson Pyles.

Also Present: Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian and
Airport Business Manager Zucker.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning, seconded by Commissioner Gates, moved to grant Commissioners Donnellan, Tymczyszyn and Chairperson Pyles excused absences for this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

As both Chairperson Pyles and Vice Chair Tymczyszyn were absent, Commissioner Ouwerkerk was selected to chair this meeting.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Browning led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF AGENDA POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Dingman, seconded by Commissioner Browning, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 14, 2005 and August 11, 2005

Commissioner Browning offered a correction to the July 14, 2005 minutes under Item 7c, Land Management Report.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved for the approval of the July 14, 2005 Airport Commission minutes as amended and the August 11, 2005 minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dingman; voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioners Donnellan, Tymczyszyn and Chairperson Pyles).

6. ACTION ITEMS

6A. COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT – 2004-05

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk noted that he prepared a draft of the Commission's Annual Report for 2004-05, which was included in the agenda material.

Commissioner Gates suggested that the following item be added under Purpose of the Airport Commission, "Make recommendations to the City Council on the operation and administration of the airport," as listed under TMC Section 13.4.7: Powers and Duties of the Airport Commission.

Nancy Clinton, 2758 Pacific Coast Highway, asked that it be noted in the report that the Experimental Aircraft Association's B-17 Fly-in (April 13-17) was sponsored by the Torrance Air Fair Association (TAFA) along with EAA Chapter 96.

MOTION: Commissioner Browning moved to approve the Airport Commission Annual Report for 2004-05 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gates and passed by unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioners Donnellan, Tymczyszyn and Chairperson Pyles).

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk thanked staff for their assistance in preparing the report.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7A. AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONAL INFORMATION UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk noted that the following reports were included in the agenda material: Hangar and Tiedown Rental Status; Ongoing Projects; September Meeting Room Schedule; and Hangar Waiting List.

7B. AERONAUTICAL OPERATIONAL INFORMATION UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk noted that the following reports were included in the agenda material: Events Requiring Emergency Response and Airfield Operations Status.

Referring to the decrease in the number of airport operations as shown on the Airport Operation Totals comparison chart, Commissioner Browning questioned whether an airport must have a certain amount of traffic to justify having a control tower.

Ms. Clinton advised that the FAA will downgrade a tower, which enables them to change the staffing level, when there is a reduction in the number of operations but they will not eliminate it.

In response to Commissioner Gate's inquiry, Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian indicated that he had not received a copy of the Caltrans inspection report.

7C. LAND MANAGEMENT REPORT

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk noted that a report from Land Management Chair Sunshine was included in the agenda material.

7D. NOISE ABATEMENT CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk noted that a report from Sr. Environmental Quality Officer Richards on the status of the Noise Abatement Capital Project, along with a map showing the location of noise monitors, was included in the agenda material.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian advised that the City hopes to have the new noise monitoring system installed as soon as possible because the old system is rapidly deteriorating. He reported that a study determined that the number of monitors could be reduced to six and that a seventh monitor will be installed if the budget permits.

7E. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Outreach & Education Committee

No report.

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

8A. Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian noted that the Commission's Annual Report for 2004-05 will be forwarded to the City Council and that Commissioners will be notified of the date.

8B. Commissioner Dingman expressed concerns about the adequacy of on-field firefighting equipment.

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk advised that a Commission subcommittee looked into this issue over a year ago and learned that it was not feasible to upgrade firefighting equipment because it would require on-field personnel to have specialized training, which would place them in a different classification, and it was felt that this was not warranted given the number of operations and the fact that the airport was not in violation of any FAA requirements.

8C. Commissioner Gates noted that information on the Airport Commission's web page is extremely out of date.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian explained that the City's website is in the process of being revamped and it will have a new look and updated information in the near future.

8D. Commissioner Gates submitted a list of items that were discussed at earlier meetings but never followed up on, including: 1) The process for getting runway and taxiway repairs into the budget; 2) The availability of Cal grants for the airport's security upgrade; 3) Discussion of establishing a project committee; 4) Work plan revision; 5) Status of Zamperini Way beautification project; and 6) The purpose of digital aerial photographs for which the City paid \$11,000 from the Airport Fund.

8E. Commissioner Gates proposed that the Commission establish a Noise Mitigation Committee, the purpose of which would be to study all airport noise-related issues and report on the following three areas: 1) The impact of airport noise on the community; 2) Prioritized list of noise mitigation measures; and 3) The effect of those measures on airport operations.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian suggested that this would be an appropriate topic to discuss when the Commission revises its work plan. He noted that on September 14, staff will be meeting with the consultant who will facilitate the formulation of the work plan to discuss the focus and scheduling of the work plan revision.

8F. Nancy Clinton, resident, reported that fuel prices at Torrance Airport went up \$.50 per gallon in one day and that South Bay Aviation blamed the price increase on Hurricane Katrina and claimed that other airports were also raising prices at least \$.50. She explained that she surveyed 6 other airports in the area and none had raised their rates and noted that self-serve is now \$4.56 per gallon at Torrance Airport and the next highest price in the South Bay is \$3.75. She reported that California's Attorney General has gone on record stating that he will prosecute anyone who engages in price gouging and indicated that she intends to bring this matter to his attention.

In response to Acting Chair Ouwerkerk's inquiry, Ms. Clinton related her understanding that Great American has turned over the running of the self-service operation to South Bay Aviation.

8F. Ms. Clinton noted that she had recently spoken with Ralph Martin of Flite Park, who indicated that they were waiting for building permits to be issued for the next phase of the project.

8G. Ms. Clinton provided an update on the Zamperini Way beautification project, noting that she would be meeting with City staff on Monday to review the final drawings and the budget for the project.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Ms. Clinton advised that the sign will not be illuminated because the area is already well-lit; that sprinklers will be solar powered; that the work will be done by a licensed landscaper; and that the City will maintain the newly landscaped median.

8H. Ms. Clinton noted the recent crash of a helicopter towing a banner owned by a company licensed to operate at Torrance Airport; maintained that this is a dangerous practice because helicopters are not designed to tow banners; and questioned whether there are plans to allow such operations in the future.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian reported that the company in question complied with all requirements to operate a transient business at the airport and even though towing a banner with a helicopter might not be the safest operation, it is permitted according to a conversation he had with the FAA. He stated that if the company decides to come back to Torrance Airport, staff has worked out an arrangement to ensure that its operation does not conflict with the Torrance Airport-based fixed-wing banner tow company.

Ms. Clinton reported that the helicopter banner tow company monopolized the banner tow area during its first weekend at Torrance Airport, making it impossible for the Torrance-based banner tow business to operate, and last weekend the helicopter training area was shut down to accommodate the helicopter banner tow company, which never showed up. She voiced her opinion that Torrance-based businesses should have priority over transient businesses.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian reiterated his belief that the conflict has been resolved, noting that the transient operation must give the City 72 hours prior notice if they wish to use the airport and the City has the option of denying their request.

Commissioner Gates asked about fees charged to use the airport.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian advised that nothing beyond the City's business license fees is required for this type of operation. He stated that he was aware that a document was circulating that indicates that there are additional fees, however, there is nothing on books and suggested that while this might have been considered at one time, it was never put into effect.

8I. Ms. Clinton echoed concerns about the adequacy of firefighting equipment on the airfield.

8J. John King, resident, indicated that he strongly objects to allowing transient businesses, such as the helicopter tow company, to interfere with the operation of Torrance-based businesses that have generated revenue for the City for a number of years.

8K. Referring to the August 11 Commission meeting minutes (Item7A), Mr. King asked about a letter from Palos Verdes homeowners that claimed that Robinson Helicopter had changed their flight pattern.

Commissioner Browning advised that Chairperson Pyles had agreed to bring the letter to this meeting, but the letter was not available due to his absence.

Facility Operations Manager Megerdichian offered to include the letter in next month's agenda material if he can obtain a copy from Chairperson Pyles.

Ms. Clinton noted that she had a copy of a letter from homeowners near Rolling Hills Country Club, which could be the letter in question.

8L. Mr. King voiced his opinion that locating a seventh noise monitor at Walteria Park was a good idea because it would help monitor noise from helicopters and recommended that one be installed at this location even if it's not in the budget. He also recommended that an eighth noise monitor be installed at Rolling Hills Plaza so that eastbound helicopter departures could be monitored.

Acting Chair Ouwerkerk recommended that Mr. King discuss this issue with Sr. Environmental Quality Officer Richards. He related his understanding that while helicopters generate a lot of complaints, they rarely violate noise limits.

8M. Referring to Commissioner Gates proposal to establish a Noise Mitigation Committee, Mr. King recalled that the Commission has in the past formed committees without revising the work plan.

8L. Referring to the earlier discussion about the transient helicopter tow company, Commissioner Gates reported that Torrance Municipal Code Section 51.2.31 does provide for the charging of fees at the airport, however, the fee is only \$1.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Thursday, October 13, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved as Written October 13, 2005 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
